CLASS 49
NATIONAL SEMINAR

Lessons Learned

We grow leaders who make a difference.
CHAIR MESSAGE

I had the opportunity a few weeks ago to attend an ag round table session hosted by my friend and former Ag Leadership board member, Ejnar Knudsen and his team at AGR Partners. As is always the case with an event hosted by Ejnar, it was a great success.

A keynote speaker talked about the one quality he believes is essential for a successful organization, trust. Owners and managers trusting their employees; employees trusting their managers; customers having trust in the company’s products and the people standing behind those products. It sounds overly simplistic, but is often overlooked and all too often not the case.

This concept of trust has been built into the fabric of Ag Leadership from the beginning. It is essential to our vision of being a catalyst for a vibrant ag community. This is why the founders required that the classes be made up of individuals who represent diversity in both location and expertise. This is still the case today. One of the most positive outcomes of the leadership program is that classmates develop a respect for the varied challenges and viewpoints that naturally occur in different regions and crops around the state. Only by trusting the views of other ag participants can we learn to resolve conflicts within the ag community so we can speak with one voice outside of ag.

I also coincidently ended up at a table alone with the administrator of the Nebraska Leadership Program. I say coincidence because two of their members attended the Ag Leadership breakfast at the World Ag Expo and sat at my table. When I mentioned I was involved with Ag Leadership, his comment was simply, “you’re the best.”

How lucky are we that the best ag leadership program in the world is right here in California? How fortunate are we that one of the best leadership programs of any kind in the U.S. is exclusively for agriculture? CALP is also the only program associated with four universities and has been in session continuously for 49 years.

Let us never lose sight of the amazing gift that California agriculture has been given with the Ag Leadership Program.
As this edition of Horizons hits your mailbox, a considerable amount of Ag Leadership alumni will be in the midst of serving on interview committees around the state looking for the 24 individuals who will make the best fit for Class 50. In cooperation with the four universities, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Cal Poly Pomona, UC Davis and Fresno State, which are a party to the original memorandum of understanding, along with Chico State, ten days of face-to-face interviews are being conducted during the month of July. With two days at each campus, this interview procedure in our selection protocol does indeed take a considerable amount of planning, as well as teamwork.

A very important first step is trying to find time in each of the schedules of the deans, Dr. Andy Thulin, Dr. Lisa Kessler, Dr. Helene Dillard and Dr. Sandra Witte, so they can participate in this vital stage of the selection process. Finding one or two days available on the calendar of a dean at a major college of agriculture such as these institutions is extremely challenging, to say the least. The demands on their time, as well as the broad range of their responsibilities, are almost mind-boggling. To expect that each dean can give up two full days is usually not realistic. And yet, year after year, these dedicated individuals somehow find a way to carve out some time to make it work.

Once two dates have been picked at each campus, proper facilities must be selected and reserved for the interviews. Here additional teamwork is required, usually involving the dean, core faculty and our own program coordinator, Judy Sparacino. With the accommodations secured, the crucial element of having experienced alumni to serve on the interview panels comes into primary focus. With our director of education, Shelli Hendricks leading the way, alumni who have the experience and knowledge, as well as opinions, as to what type of individual makes a proactive fellow in Ag Leadership, are selected for each site.

Prior to the actual interviews, considerable time and effort is spent by our program advisor, Dr. Charlie Crabb, in designing an online application system that not only gets the required information and background from applicants, but does so in a way that is not considered overburdensome. In addition to his expertise with information technology, Dr. Crabb is then tasked with the responsibility of finding and utilizing experienced alumni to review initial applications to determine program eligibility and move them forward from Phase 1 to Phase 2. Teamwork and timely communication between these alumni is essential to the success of the selection system.

After applicants complete their Phase 2 submission and are invited to personal interviews, the focus turns to the teamwork necessary between the alumni who are asking the questions on each regional panel and how they will come together to decide who they will recommend to continue to the next stage of the process. Additionally, each panel of alumni must agree who will represent their own selection recommendations at the final selection meeting which takes place in August. Here the alumni must understand their goal is not simply to get their recommendations into the class, but rather cooperate with all of the other participating alumni to secure the 24 individuals representing the best fit.

And lastly, the final screening process is the ultimate display of teamwork as alumni, with input from the director of education and president of the foundation, both of whom have attended all of the interview sessions, concentrate on the stated mission and vision of the program; namely, selecting individuals who will be “leaders who make a difference” and who will be “a catalyst for a vibrant agricultural community.” This is our challenge as well as our opportunity to build each class with the most effective mix of agriculturists who will indeed provide a positive return on the investment made by our donors for the benefit of California agriculture.
Dean Witte Announces Retirement

Dr. Sandra Witte, dean of Fresno State’s Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences & Technology, announced this spring that she will retire.

“I am filled with excitement and some sadness, too, as I tell you I will be retiring this summer,” said Witte. “I will be working with Interim Provost Harper, Provost Designate Jimenez-Sandoval and President Castro to develop a leadership plan for the Jordan College during the next year while a search is conducted.”

Witte was named dean in March 2016 after serving as interim dean for the Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology and associate dean of academic affairs. Prior to that time she was a professor of nutrition and chair of the department of food science and nutrition at Fresno State.

Witte completed her Bachelor of Science in foods and nutrition at Cal Poly, Pomona in 1973; her dietetic internship at the University of California Hospitals and Clinics, San Francisco in 1974; her Master of Science in home economics, nutrition and dietetics at Fresno State in 1981 and her Doctor of Philosophy in food systems management from Oregon State University, Corvallis, in 1992.

Alumni Meet with President Trump

Holly King (24), chair of the Almond Board of California and Charley Matthews, Jr. (26) met with President Donald Trump on May 23 during his announcement of $16 billion to aid agriculture with his trade mitigation package due to the impacts of the tariffs.

Board of Directors Meet

On May 10 CALF’s board chairman, Jeff Elder (35), called to order the board of directors meeting at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. The foundation committee chairs for the 2019-2020 fiscal year were selected: Rick Burns (41), audit committee; Dean Andy Thulin, dean’s council; Karen Caplan, communications advisory committee; Karm Bains (40), development advisory committee; Jim Maxwell, finance and investment committee; Jeff Elder, governance and executive committees; Bob Cherenson (29), program advisory committee.

The board voted to approve a resolution to recognize former board member, Edwin Camp (15), for his outstanding service to the foundation. They also adopted the $2.14 million budget for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020). The board’s next meeting is scheduled for August and will focus on a continuing review of strategic planning issues and to further develop plans for the foundation’s 50th anniversary celebration which will be held in October of next year.

Passing of Dr. Charley Hess

Dr. Charles E. “Charley” Hess, a UC Davis Medal recipient and dean emeritus of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, passed away on April 13 at the age of 87.

Hess earned a Bachelor of Science degree in plant science at Rutgers University, a Master of Science degree in horticulture and plant pathology at Cornell, and a Ph.D. in horticulture, plant physiology and plant pathology, also at Cornell. He joined the Purdue faculty in 1958, then returned to Rutgers in 1966 as chair of the Department of Horticulture and Forestry. He advanced to acting dean of Rutgers’ College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences in 1971 and two years later became the founding dean of Rutgers’ Cook College (today known as the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences). He became the dean at UC Davis in 1975 and held the post until 1989. His faculty appointment was in the Department of Environmental Horticulture (now part of the Department of Plant Sciences).

He stepped down as dean, after 14 years, to accept an appointment by President George H.W. Bush to be the assistant secretary for science and education in the USDA, serving from 1989 to 1991. Prior to that Hess had two presidential appointments to the National Science Board.

Friends, family and colleagues celebrated his life and his contributions to the university on May 24 at the Robert Mondavi Institute for Wine and Food Science. His family announced that charitable donations in his memory are welcome to any organization, but two of particular significance to him and his family are the Charles and Eva Hess Scholarship in Production Agriculture and Yolo Hospice.
Alumni from as early as Class 2 and as recently as Class 48 joined Ag Leadership in May for a fun-filled reunion weekend.
“THE ALL-CLASS REUNION WAS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW OLD RELATIONSHIPS AND MAKE SOME NEW ONES. WE CAN HARDLY WAIT FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IN OCTOBER 2020!”
- PHIL WADDELL (29)
In early May approximately 125 alumni—ranging from Class 2 to 48—gathered along with family members and friends at Loren Booth’s (27) ranch in Minkler for the Ag Leadership All-Class Reunion. Attendees enjoyed relaxing, fishing, dancing and time to connect and reminisce with friends.

The event officially kicked off on Friday evening with a progressive dinner. Alumni and other guests visited various campsites to enjoy appetizers and socializing. The evening also included a movie option for the kids and spending time around the campfire.

Saturday began with an array of activities for the kids. They learned about bugs from “The Bug Lady” and enjoyed hay rides around the ranch. The top three winners of the fishing tournament—Eben Jones, Garrin Schaap and Johanna Lee Jones—went home with new fishing poles.

Saturday’s events continued with an onsite taco truck lunch, a buffet dinner and brief program led by CALF’s president, Barry Bedwell (13) and board chairman, Jeff Elder (35). The evening included dancing, sitting around the campfire, the class challenge and camp awards. Congratulations to Class 40 for having the best attendance and to Barbara Wight (35) for traveling the farthest.

Special thanks to Loren Booth for welcoming the group to her ranch; to co-chairs Gail Gray (22) and Deanna van Klaveren (32) for planning and organizing the event; Rod Stark (29) for managing (and building) the bar; Phil Waddell (29), who was in charge of inventory and supplies and to Vernon Peterson (41) for making fresh squeezed orange juice.

Thank you also to Jon Reelhorn (38) for the succulents; Jeff Bitter (32)/Allied Grape Growers, Glenn Proctor (29)/Puccioni Vineyards and Yvonne Sams (45) and Tim Fitzgerald (48) from G3 Enterprises for providing wine.

“The picturesque setting near the banks of the Kings River provided the perfect venue for family bonding as well as time for friends to engage in conversation and catch up on each other’s lives,” said Barry Bedwell (13). “This latest edition of the All-Class Reunion was an unabashed success and reminded us all how lucky we are to be a part of this fabulous program.”

“MOST EVENTS ARE FAIRLY HIGH ENERGY WITH A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME TO BE WITH LOTS OF PEOPLE. THE ALL-CLASS REUNION WAS SO NICE BECAUSE IT WAS SO RELAXED. IT WAS THE QUINTESSENTIAL QUALITY TIME WE NEVER HAVE TIME FOR. VERY NICE.”

-Vernon Peterson (41)
"From the stone cold prison cells at Eastern State Penitentiary, to the historic halls of the Supreme Court that decide our country’s fate, Congressmen, Senators, women, ambassadors and Russian dignitaries have told us their stories and have expanded our future leadership visions. Class 49 is immensely thankful for the lessons and memories from this national seminar and the new connections that will help take us far."
By Liza Teixeira Robertson

In early March the fellows of Class 49 learned about state and national issues through meetings, discussions and interactive lessons in Sacramento, Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia. The seminar provides a valuable extension to the study of state and national issues during the first year of the program.

The national seminar began on March 4 in Sacramento. The fellows had their first meeting at the office of Somach, Simmons and Dunn with Tess Dunham (29) to learn about the need for the farming community to take a more proactive approach with trade associations, policy groups and law makers. The fellows were then hosted by Jackson Gualco (20), at The Gualco Group’s office overlooking Sacramento, to discuss various laws and regulations and the importance of collaboration opportunities. The seminar continued at the office of Kahn, Soares & Conway with Lauren Hajik (48), where the fellows met with Sen. Steve Glazer, Joaquin Esquivel from the State Water Resources Control Board and Jenny Lester Moffitt (47), undersecretary for the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

“To round out the day, we had a final review where we did a deeper dive into today’s themes of being proactive, getting engaged and finding collaboration opportunities. One commonality between all speakers was the sense of hope everyone feels towards the new governor. His decisions to engage farmers and ranchers is allowing him to work outside the box and cross party lines for the benefit of all.”
- National Seminar Blog Entry

The second day of the national seminar began with a tour of the Capitol with Sen. Jim Nielsen (5). The day continued with several meetings with state leaders who discussed housing affordability, transportation, climate change, the importance of educating urban members about agriculture, community engagement, the state budget process, the narrowing divide between urban and rural communities and various policy issues.

“The resounding theme of the day is that we, as agriculturalists and as people in general, must be ENGAGED. The advice and insight provided by each person who we met with is invaluable. We are incredibly humbled and honored by the opportunity to meet with these influential leaders.”
- Blog Entry

On the third day of the seminar the fellows of Class 49 traveled from Sacramento to Philadelphia on a very turbulent day.

“We all struggle with our personal turbulence. On a ten day trip, across the country, meeting with politicians and appointed officials, we all have a few bumps that we have to handle on a personal level. We have all had to step away from our families, delegate responsibilities at work and focus on building ourselves into stronger leaders than before. While this can be tough, together we know and understand that we are becoming the leaders we want to be, ones that can and will make a difference. Good leadership is helping those through their turbulence, but it is also turbulence that shapes great leaders.”
- Blog Entry

In Philadelphia the fellows spent time at the Eastern State Penitentiary. During the visit fellows learned about the historical aspect of the prison as well as current societal challenges. They also listened in on a panel discussion about mass incarceration and criminal justice reform in Philadelphia.
“Our day concluded with a class synthesis. As leaders, we will often make decisions that have long-lasting implications for future generations or other areas of society. As we learned today, decisions within the criminal justice system from 200 years ago have contributed to mass incarceration and the current prison model in the United States. Across all issues, as leaders, we must take time to engage in the discussion and learn others’ perspectives, seek the common ground and be willing to collaborate. As leaders, we need to accept responsibilities for our decisions and how those will impact others in the years to come—even when we are wrong, we must be brave and acknowledge we may not have been right.”

- Blog Entry

The fourth day of the seminar took the fellows of Class 49 to the National Constitution Center where they stood among the 42 life-sized statues of the Founding Fathers while learning about the historical leadership of the United States.

“Once we departed the National Constitution Center, we made our way to beautiful Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were written and signed. Originally the Pennsylvania State House, the hall includes the former state Supreme Court, where the English common law was judiciously exercised. Next, we saw the Assembly Room, the site of the signing of the two most important documents of American history—one which created our country, the other which preserved it.”

-Blog Entry

In Gettysburg the fellows learned about challenges faced by leaders during wartime from Bruce Rice, a licensed battlefield guide. After leaving the battlefield, they discussed the different leadership styles of presidents during times of turmoil.

“It’s said that the first casualty of war is your plan. Rarely do we jump into situations without an idea of how to get to a result. What’s important is to keep the end goal in mind and live in the moment, don’t get bogged down with the minutia.”

-Blog Entry

After a busy few days of educational experiences and leadership lessons in Philadelphia and Gettysburg, the fellows attended a service at the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church. Fellows also visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Holocaust Museum, the National Portrait Gallery and took part in a nighttime monuments tour.

“The Sunday service pushed many fellows out of their comfort zones with its enthusiastic sermons and lively music, allowing for reflection on the previous days’ experiences. Many emotions surfaced as we were welcomed with smiles, hugs, overwhelming happiness and a very memorable sermon by an enthusiastic Reverend William H. Lamar. We found it interesting that many of the concepts during Rev. Lamar’s sermon tied into leadership lessons we’ve been covering through the curriculum since we began our Ag Leadership journey. Rev. Lamar inquired with the congregation about the challenging situation of being confronted and confronting others when we have a difficult dialogue that needs to take place. This was very reminiscent of content covered in one of our assigned readings, Crucial Conversations.”

-Blog Entry

In Washington, D.C., fellows visited the National Defense University and learned about national security strategy and the development of leaders who serve the common defense. At the Capitol, fellows met with a food and agricultural lobbyist and representatives from the Department of Interior. The day concluded with a night tour of the U.S. Capitol led by Rep. Jim Costa.
“At the end of a very long day we were appreciative of the moments and the lessons learned. We will be going home with a new appreciation for looking beyond the immediate moment and being willing to take quantum leaps.”

In preparation for their international seminar, the fellows visited the Russian Embassy. They began with a tour led by embassy staff before meeting with the agricultural attaché who spoke to them about Russia’s agriculture industry.

“The embassy grounds are made up of more than just diplomatic offices. It is a thriving community that houses a school, grocery store, apartments and yes, a disco bar that professional Russian athletes frequent. The building gave us a taste and glimpse of what Moscow and the beautiful architecture will consist of. From the wood panels to the light fixtures, everything was imported from Russia to create this beautiful palace-like building. The tour ended with hot tea and Russian sweets.”

On their final day in Washington, D.C., the fellows met with members of the California Congressional Delegation, received a tour and briefing at the U.S. Supreme Court and met several D.C. area leaders. Fellows discussed policy, politics and bipartisanship with Reps. Devin Nunes (29), Josh Harder, TJ Cox, Mike Thompson, Jimmy Panetta and Jim Costa. They were then joined by Dennis Nuxoll, vice president of federal government relations for the Western Growers Association, who gave an update about the major policy issues impacting agriculture. At the Hart Senate Office Building fellows met with Sen. Diane Feinstein and her staff.

“Our trip concluded on the steps of the Supreme Court—a building where history is considered and future precedence is decided. While we have been inspired, motivated and educated during these past ten days, we are excited to return to our farms, families and businesses and begin to implement the lessons we have learned so far.”

-The Blog Entry
SINCE ITS BEGINNINGS, CALIFORNIA HAS REPRESENTED THE AMERICAN DREAM. FROM THE TIME OF THE GOLD RUSH TO THE DUST BOWL, AND NOW THE PRESENT, PEOPLE IDENTIFY OUR STATE WITH AN IDEAL LIFE. AGRICULTURE HAS BEEN THE FOUNDATION OF THAT DREAM.

At the same time, the last census highlighted that 95% of California’s residents live in urban areas and that number is increasing. In agriculture, we see this phenomenon reflected in a variety of ways: retailers are making decisions in the marketplace based on expectations of urban consumers, our agricultural leadership and development programs consist more and more of participants that are not tied directly to production agriculture and the State Legislature is highly urbanized with very few farmers amongst our elected officials.

On the receiving end of these changes, it can make agriculture question the future of the industry. While some decisions are made without our input, there is also opportunity to take these challenges and open the door to other possibilities, if we have an open mind. This mindset, fostered through Ag Leadership, has helped open many doors in the legislature to the potential benefit of the industry.

Like all fellows in Ag Leadership, I was forced—yes, forced—to take the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality assessment and learned I was an ENTJ. This personality type, often nicknamed "commander," exhibits signs of leadership but also often rubs people the wrong way. And the letter J, specifically, lends itself to judgment and sees things as black and white.

Through Ag Leadership’s visits to places such as Homeboy Industries, the tour of San Quentin and many of the other profound leadership activities, the lessons learned are deep. Every story is unique. Every life is unique. Every outcome is unique.

The challenge to those of us involved in public policy is to serve this industry in a way that promotes and protects agriculture, with an audience that is deeply removed from food production. Legislators across the state are attempting to represent 40 million people with a wide diversity of interests and the opportunity presented to us is to make agriculture relevant to their needs, while trying to simultaneously achieve ours.

Agriculture can play a part in many of the solutions to issues across the state, but we must take the 'listen first' approach. In a heavily urbanized state, the census numbers demonstrate we need partners outside of agriculture. By listening first, we can better understand the motivations of others and work to create solutions that achieve compatible goals.
Recent examples include:
Many California schools were purchasing imported products for the school lunch program. We worked with the legislature to understand why our tax dollars were not prioritizing domestic products and why schools were not complying with federal mandates to do so. Ultimately, we were able to pass legislation to drive schools to adhere to the Buy American provision when purchasing products for school lunch programs.

Agriculture worked closely with the Brown administration to create a package of incentive dollars funded by the statewide cap and trade program to help agriculture reduce emissions throughout the food system—from diesel engine replacement programs at the farm level to a grant program for food processors. The Brown administration invested more than $600 million in agriculture due to this collaboration and that funding is being implemented today.

A very current and real example is Ag Council’s work on drinking water. By listening first, we engaged in a conversation with a group in the environmental justice (EJ) community who wants to address the drinking water crisis outside of the current approach of creating enforcement actions on farmers and initiating litigation. Agriculture needs relief from the regulatory conflicts at play that prevent us from meeting groundwater quality standards in many areas of the state.

Common ground between agriculture and this group of EJ advocates exist on many levels. Not only would funds benefit our rural areas and disadvantaged communities, but we all agree too much money is being spent on attorneys and the bureaucracy. We all want drinking water to get to those in need and to find a solution that works for the farming community. We have been successful in creating a package of potential solutions to address these very complex needs.

Like most tough negotiations, this legislative package is controversial. Nobody, including myself, likes to pay fees. But this is a true crisis and I knew we needed to be part of the solution.

Our coalition continues to feel some backlash.
- Pressure comes from the left claiming agriculture is "getting off the hook," on an environmental issue.
- Pressure comes from the right that our fees are going up, despite very specific cost-control measures included in these various concepts.

In a state of 40 million people, everyone’s opinion is equally important. So what do you do, when everyone is right? We work to create practical solutions for people in need and help deliver results. This is now being called “The Radical Middle.”

Absorbing the concept that everyone’s opinion is equally important is tough. However, in a world where votes are delivered based on constituent opinions, the opinions are truly equal.

Reflecting on my personality assessment, the “J” in me would never have written that previous paragraph. We in agriculture know that we are always right and of course our opinion is the true and just opinion.

As a staff development exercise, I recently took the MBTI again and learned my personality profile changed. I’m no longer an ENTJ, but an ENTP. Dr. Lattore, who is widely respected by Ag Leadership and who conducted our staff exercise, informed me, “Life has a way of beating the ‘J’ out of you.” I guess he is right. Maybe the legislature is to blame, too.

By the same token, participation in these controversial coalitions is paying off. We are getting asked by other environmental groups to assist with like-minded causes.

Some environmental groups are growing increasingly frustrated with state and local permitting processes because they are getting in the way of environmental improvement projects. We have engaged in initial conversations with some of them because we are also hoping to create a solution that will assist in improving the on-farm permitting process. The conversation on this subject is just now beginning.

I believe we are getting asked because we are building trust with the environmental community, which is a good thing. In a state of 40 million people with 95% living in urban areas, if we want success, we need partners. The numbers dictate that.

Before Ag Leadership, I thought agriculture was under attack in California. But now I see it differently. Our principles—providing the highest quality food, acting as stewards of the land and practicing values of family and community—are not being attacked.

Now I see that it is not our principles, but our practices—farm labor, water use, environmental impacts—that are being questioned.

I am willing to bet that if we stick to our principles and continue to evaluate and improve our practices, as we already do, we will weather this storm and eventually win the fight for relevance and pave the way for meaningful success for California agriculture.

Emily Rooney (39) joined Ag Council in 2008 and became president in 2010. Ag Council represents approximately 15,000 farmers across California, ranging from small, farmer-owned businesses to some of the world’s best-known brands. Ag Council manages legislative and regulatory matters for its members in Sacramento.
We connected with former AC leaders and spent a couple of hours reflecting on the history of the AC and how we got to where we are today. The discussion was led by Mike Young (35) and Deanna van Klaveren (32). Matt Fisher (41) and Bill van Skike (32) assisted in organizing and planning for the presentation.

Some of the highlights from the presentation included learning about the original alumni program. The alumni program was called ALA (Agricultural Leadership Alumni) and it existed from 1974-2004. Several changes came about in 2004, including making the AC part of the foundation, as opposed to its own non-profit group. In 2010, the foundation created the mission statement: “We grow leaders who make a difference” and the vision statement: “California agricultural leaders united as a catalyst for a vibrant industry.” In 2015, several alumni, directors, board members and staff participated in developing a foundation and alumni realignment. In 2016, AC chair, Jason Cole (42) and I (42), along with several regional directors, board members and staff, participated in a strategic planning process that aligned our goals with the board's goals and set out on our AC journey.

**The goals we revisited:**

1) Develop a process to engage our alumni to increase participation.
2) Continue to define the structure, roles and responsibilities for the Alumni Council.
3) Establish fundraising SMART goals.
4) Enhance the pool of applicants for the program.
5) Create an alumni database.
6) Increase expectations of fellows in each new to class to become active alumni and create a process to integrate them into the alumni “tribe.”
In addition to taking a ride through the time machine and learning about our history, the foundation’s new director of education, Shelli Hendricks, offered up an aggressive and exciting plan to launch a continuing learning community for alumni. Yes, you read that correctly! Guided by Shelli and brought to you by your regional directors, we will now have online and in-person learning sessions available. Topics for these learning sessions include, but are not limited to: persuasive communication, emotional intelligence and leadership styles. Several of these topics will align with what current fellows are learning about in their seminars.

We couldn’t be more excited, as many regional directors have been working diligently the past five years to help this program come to life. We can’t thank Shelli enough for spending one-on-one time with regional directors and alumni to form such an amazing plan, where all alumni will benefit. Thank you, Shelli! Our biggest hope for this program is to increase alumni engagement, give alumni access to pieces of the current curriculum and to continue to “grow leaders who make a difference.”

Darlene Din (35) delivered a great presentation about the purpose and meaning behind the D.C. and CA Exchange programs. The success of these events relies entirely on Darlene’s leadership, the collaboration of co-chairs Chase Hurley (35) and Melissa Dufflock (40) and the alumni who dedicate their time to coordinate and deliver a meaningful program. If you are interested in participating in these programs, please connect with Darlene Din at darlenedin@earthlink.net.

The Regional Directors left the May meeting with tools and the beginning of a plan to build momentum and strengthen the alumni program. Expect calls, emails and text messages from your directors, asking for your time, talent and treasure, as well as your participation in local events and access to the all-new learning community. Our eyes are on the 50th anniversary celebration, coming to Monterey in October of 2020. We are looking forward to working with each of you and celebrating our best event, yet!

Thank you to Mandi Nack for serving as the alumni coordinator. We wish Mandi the very best and are thankful for her service and time at CALF. If you have any questions regarding alumni programs, please contact Emily Lazzerini and she can connect you to the right staff member. Emily’s email address is elazzerini@agleaders.org and her phone number is 831-585-1030.

More than 100 alumni families attended the All-Class Reunion at Loren Booth’s (27) Minkler Ranch in May. Thank you just never seems to be enough for all of Loren’s time, talent and treasure that she continues to give to the California Agricultural Leadership Program, foundation and alumni. We are forever grateful for you, Loren. A special thank you to committee members Deanna van Klaveren (32), Gail Gray (22), Vernon Peterson (41), Phil Waddell (29) and Rod Stark (29). A special thank you for time and contributions to Darlene Din (35), Jon Reelhorn (38) and Glenn Proctor (29). Finally, thank you to Judy, Emily and Mandi for all of their support to the committee. We appreciate you!
April 4
Common Threads North Dinner, Chico
Manpreet Bains (43)
Colleen Cecil
Judy Culbertson
Sarah DeForest (39)
Nicole Darracq (37)
Louise Ferguson (30)
Sandy Fiack (29)
Robin Flournoy (29)
Pam Giacomini (21)
Heidi Harris (43)
Jeana Hultquist (38)
Lynn Martindale (31)
Kelly Mora (48)
René Whitchurch
Stephanie Younger

May 10
Region 7 Alumni Social & Recruitment BBQ, Arroyo Grande
Lisa Bodrogi (39)
Chris Darway (25)
Tom Ikeda (26)
Dan Sutton (40)
Brian Talley (30)

April 4
Region 5 Alumni Social & Recruitment Event, Salinas
Steve (33) and Danielle McShane (43)

April 15
Region 2 Recruitment Event, Healdsburg
Region 2 Alumni

May 3-5
All-Class Reunion, Minkler
Loren Booth (27)
Gail Gray (22)
Emily Lazzerini
Mandi Nack
Vernon Peterson (41)
Rod Stark (29)
Deanna van Klaveren (32)
Phil Waddell (29)
ALUMNI & FELLOWS NEWS

Classes 1-9
Rusty Arias (6), while serving as California state parks commissioner, worked to help fund the purchase of a 300-acre farm to establish the Martial Cottle Park in San Jose.

Classes 10-19
The late Ben Drake (12), longtime board member and president of the Temecula Valley Winegrowers Association, was inducted into the Temecula Valley Winemakers Hall of Fame. A ceremony was held on April 18 at South Coast Winery.

Mark Chandler (18) and Jan Burlington Chandler recently launched their own wine brand, Burlington Chandler Wine. The grapes are grown on their estate vineyards in the center of the Lodi appellation.

Classes 20-29
Fred Berry (20) retired in May. After decades of service in the produce industry, he left his position as senior account manager for Homegrown Organic Farms.

Loren Booth (27) was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo during the university’s commencement ceremony in June. Booth was an animal sciences major who attended both Cal Poly universities.

Jakkí and Mike Sencer (28) were two of eight people chosen by the American Egg Board to present the commemorative egg to First Lady Melania Trump at the annual White House Easter Egg Roll in April. More than 74,000 eggs were donated by egg farmers for the 42nd annual event.

Classes 30-39
Jose Baer (33) is now working as a senior project manager for PowWow Energy. He is managing the “CropMonitor Software as a Service” product with a focus in the northern California region.

Jeff Elder (35) joined Oritain in March as its managing director for North America. The company specializes in verifying the origin of products using forensic science and data analysis.

Classes 40-49
Kandi Manhart (40) was recognized by the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts as winner of its annual Employee of the Year Award. Kandi was honored at the association’s 73rd annual conference held in San Diego.

Dan Sutton (40) testified before the House General Farm Commodities and Risk Management Subcommittee in May regarding the review of the state of the farm economy.

Todd Snider (41) recently formed Western Ag Crop Insurance Services, LLC, an independent crop insurance agency.

Danielle McShane (43) received the Women of Influence award from the Silicon Valley Business Journal. She is one of 100 women who were recognized in May for their impact on their professions and in their community.

Marc Metzer (46) and his family’s operation, Metzer Farms, were featured in the March/April issue of California Bountiful magazine. The article, titled “Sunny-side up,” highlights a farmer-chef partnership that brings duck eggs to diners’ plates.

Denise Moore (46) was appointed to the Placer County Agricultural Commission by the Board of Supervisors. She will serve a four year term as the nursery industry representative.

Casey Creamer (47) was appointed as president of California Citrus Mutual (CCM), Casey started at CCM in February 2018 as executive vice president and assumed the role of president/CEO in February 2019.

Paul Crout (48), vineyard manager and viticulturist at Vineyard Professional Services, gave an interview to the Vineyard Team podcast. In the May 2 episode, Paul explains why keeping records of water and nitrogen use in the vineyard is important.

Hans Herkert (47) was appointed to the board of trustees for Reclamation District 1004 in June. The district delivers irrigation water to farmers in Colusa and Glenn counties.

Alyssa Houtby (49) was among the elite runners who participated in the 2019 Boston Marathon on April 15. She completed the race with a time of 3:08.

Multiple Classes
Mike Campbell (3), Steve Heringer (9) and Jeff Merwin (20) were presented the Business Partnership Service Award in recognition of their outstanding service to public education. The award was presented by the dean of the College of Education at CSU, Sacramento. The three were recognized as co-founders of the innovative Learning Garden at the Delta Charter School in Clarksburg.

Ben Carter (24), Doug Dickson (24), Craig McNamara (28), Mary Kimball (32), Jeana Hultquist (38), David Shabazian (41) and Secretary Karen Ross (Honorary Fellow) participated in the effort to break ground on a statewide headquarters for the Center for Land-Based Learning.

Jeana Hultquist (38) and Emily Rooney (39) were presented with Honorary State FFA Degrees. Recipients are recognized for their efforts to advance agricultural education and the FFA. The Honorary State Degree Ceremony took place on April 27 at the Anaheim Convention Center Arena.

Wine Institute announced the election of board officers and district directors, including Randall Lange (14) as board secretary and Northern Interior district director and Nicholas Miller (36), as Central Coast district alternate.

Ian LeMay (48) began his role as president of the California Fresh Fruit Association (CFFA) in June. His predecessor, George Radanovich (21), held the position since 2016. George will now be working to promote ag labor policy in Washington, D.C.

Honorary Fellow
Karen Ross was selected as the recipient of the California State Fair 2019 Agriculturist of the Year Award. She was honored at the California State Fair Gala on June 27.
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